

Notice of meeting and agenda

Pentland Hills Regional Park Joint Committee

12.30 pm Monday, 24th February, 2020

In the Regional Park Headquarters, Hermitage of Braid, 69A Braid Road, Edinburgh
EH10 6JF

This is a public meeting and members of the public are welcome to attend

Contacts

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1. Order of Business

- 1.1** Including any notices of motion and any other items of business submitted as urgent for consideration at the meeting.

2. Declaration of Interests

- 2.1** Members should declare any financial and non-financial interests they have in the items of business for consideration, identifying the relevant agenda item and the nature of their interest.

3. Deputations

- 3.1** If any.

4. Minutes

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|------------|---|---------|
| 4.1 | Minute of the Pentland Hills Regional Park Joint Committee of 30 November 2018 – submitted for approval as a correct record (circulated) | 5 - 12 |
| 4.2 | Minute of the Pentland Hills Regional Park Consultative Forum of 22 February 2019 – submitted for approval as a correct record (circulated) | 13 - 24 |

5. Regional Park Issues

- 5.1 Strategic Management Plan – Update Following Consultation Responses – verbal report by the Senior Natural Heritage Officer
- 5.2 Update on Heritage Lottery Fund Pentland Path Project - verbal report by Senior Natural Heritage Officer/Edinburgh and Lothians Greenspace Trust
- 5.3 Workplan Delivery Update 2019/20 - verbal report by Senior Natural Heritage Officer
- 5.4 Harlaw House - Café and Car Parking - update by Convener

6. Dates of Next Meetings

- 6.1 Dates for future meetings –

PHRP Consultative Forum	To be confirmed
PHRP Joint Committee	29 May 2020

Laurence Rockey

Head of Strategy and Communications

Pentland Hills Regional Park Joint Committee Members

Voting Members

The City of Edinburgh Council: Councillors Neil Gardiner (Convener), Graeme Bruce, and Ricky Henderson.

Midlothian Council: Councillors Russell Imrie, Kelly Parrie and Pauline Winchester.

West Lothian Council: Councillor Damian Timson.

Non-voting members:

Scottish Water: Alan Fail.

Scottish Natural Heritage: Janice Winning.

East Lothian Council (to be nominated).

Farming: Bob Barr (NFU).

Landowning: Clare Sturla (SLE).

Information about the Pentland Hills Regional Park Joint Committee

The Joint Committee is responsible for the funding and governance of the Regional Park and comprises elected members from the constituent local authorities covering the area of the Regional Park, and other public bodies with an interest in the area, and a representative each from the farming and landowning interests. The Joint Committee meets at least twice each year.

Further information

If you have any questions about the agenda or meeting arrangements, please contact Blair Ritchie, Committee Services, City of Edinburgh Council, Waverley Court, Business Centre 2.1, 4 East Market Street, Edinburgh EH8 8BG Tel 0131 529 4085, e-mail blair.ritchie@edinburgh.gov.uk

A copy of the agenda and papers for this meeting will be available for inspection prior to the meeting at the main reception office, City Chambers, High Street, Edinburgh.

The agenda, minutes and public reports for this meeting and all the main Council committees can be viewed online by going to <https://democracy.edinburgh.gov.uk/ieDocHome.aspx?bcr=1>.

Minutes

Pentland Hills Regional Park Joint Committee

10.00am, Friday 30 November 2018 in the Regional Park Headquarters, Hermitage of Braid, Edinburgh

Present:

Voting Members:

City of Edinburgh Council – Councillors Gardiner (Convener), and Bruce.

West Lothian Council – Councillor Timson

Non-Voting Members:

National Farmers Union – Bob Barr

Scottish Land and Estates – Clare Stula

Edinburgh and Lothians Greenspace Trust – Charlie Cumming

In attendance:

David Jamieson, Jenny Hargreaves and Victor Partridge (City of Edinburgh Council), Justin Venton, Douglas Harvey, Susan Arbuckle, Garry Sheret, (Midlothian Council), Chris Alcorn (West Lothian Council (Planning)) and Blair Ritchie (City of Edinburgh Council).

Scott Fraser (Scottish Water), David Logan (Caledonian Water Alliance), Andrew Munnis (Montague Evans).

1. Minute

The minute of the Pentland Hills Regional Park Consultative Forum of 4 May 2018 were submitted and approved as a correct record.

The minute of the Pentland Hills Regional Park Joint Committee of 25 May 2018 were submitted and approved as a correct record, subject to the amendment of Page 2, paragraph 1, line 1 to: “The Convener indicated that Health and Social Care could help to get funding.”

2. Destination Hillend

Garry Sheret (Midlothian Council) reported on the proposals for “Destination Hillend” and outlined the following issues:

Background and Introduction

- Hillend was over 50 years old
- It was underachieving

Current Issues

- It was an aging facility
- The freestyle surface was now closed

Overview

- Increased number of schools were visiting

Our vision

- To create something that was not affected by the seasons
- Year round destination
- Bring people from all age groups
- Bring people from all over Scotland
- Ensure future of Hillend
- Infrastructure upgrade required

Bring Reception to 21st Century

- Bring digital elements
- Bus transfer links
- Foodcourts and cafes
- Retail units required
- Take pressure off Midlothian Council for ski hire
- Wigwams – camping element
- Attractive views
- Attracting tourism

Alpine Coaster

- Boost tourism
- At 800 metres, it was the longest in UK

Jump Slope

- Flexible Jump Slope extensions
- Fun slope

Hilo Activity Dome

- First in Scotland

Hotel Site

- There had been discussions with hotel operators

Summary

- Aimed to create year round family oriented attraction
- Safeguard the future of the site
- Income stream required
- Opportunity to create something of national importance
- Would attract people both locally and further afield

Discussion took place and the following points were made:

- There was no café on top as there was only a chairlift for access at present, which would be exposed for users.
- The Dome gave off a “glare”, but would be possible to change the colour to make it blend in with the surroundings.
- The contours of the site meant the buildings were not visible as they fitted into the contours of the hills. Even the Dome was in a “hollow” area and it should not be too visible.
- When the Natural Heritage staff was relocated, it might be possible for there to be accommodation at Hillend.
- There could be a visitor facility to provide information on the routes.
- There were various planning stages to go through and the developers should be on site next year but had phased this to 2022. But it was necessary to first carry out work on infrastructure to cope with the increased visitor number and on structures such as the Coaster.
- There would be a two-lane road for access. The Junction on to the Biggar Road was currently being designed. A filter lane was a possibility, but the possibility of more free flowing traffic should be explored. It would also be necessary to carry out a transport assessment for the planning application.
- It might be necessary to introduce charges for the car park at Hillend and consider other revenue streams.
- Regarding car parking, to cope with additional cars up the slope, it was necessary to consider the contours of the hill. If there was sufficient demand to justify a second tier, this could be considered in future.
- The resurfacing of the slope would be undertaken as ongoing maintenance.
- All the land was zoned for leisure activity, it complemented what already existed and was in keeping with adventure sports. There was nothing contrary to the Local Plan.
- There had been positive discussions with a leading hotel brand regarding the Hotel. The proposed footprint was merely an expansion of the existing footprint.
- The Convener thought that this was a welcome development and that encouraging some of the tourists to visit attractions outside of the city would be beneficial.
- There should be adequate parking and good public transport to provide choice.
- The transport assessment report would address active travel.

- It was necessary to establish the routes and destinations for buses.
- It was hoped that there would be very little “down time” for skiing caused by the proposed development, as the Snowsports Centre would remain open throughout the works, apart from normal closure of slopes for maintenance.
- It might be advantageous to contact the Transport Convener regarding proposed travel arrangements.
- The proposed road would not affect that building at bottom of Hillend which was leased to the Friends of Pentlands.

The Convener thanked the officer for the presentation.

Decision

To note the update.

3. Wondering What Scottish Water was doing in the Pentland Hills – South Edinburgh Resilience

David Logan (Customer Liaison Officer, Caledonia Water Alliance) and Scott Fraser, (Regional Communities Manager) reported on the South Edinburgh Service Resilience Project and outlined the following:

Project Overview

Caledonia Water Alliance (CWA) had been tasked with improving the water network within Edinburgh and the Lothians, in partnership with Scottish Water.

- Over 12km of pipeline
- New temporary Pumping Station
- Increasing Resilience

Working within the Pentland Hills Regional Park

Working within the Regional Park did not come without its challenges. Some of the key challenges faced were:

- Keeping access for the public across the Pentland paths.
- WW1 practice trenches
- Unexploded Ordnance
- Environmental

Engineering Challenges

Working on Projects of this scale did not come without its challenges. Some of the key challenges faced were

- Auger Bore under A702
- Harlaw Burn
- Road Crossings
- Existing Utilities

Discussion took place and the following points were made:

- The WW1 practice trenches would be marked out by the Archaeological Team. Reports had been sent to the Council.
- The possible re-instatement of the trenches could be considered, but it would be necessary to consult with MOD in the Park.
- The iron pipes were well over 100 years old, as plastic did not last as long as iron, the pipe would be wrapped to increase the lifetime of the pipe
- All pressure on the pipe connections were tested as the work progressed.
- There would be no replacement pipes to the reservoir at Hillend, the pipes would connect the junction where the pipes went to the reservoir.
- It was expected that the project would be completed in 2020.
- If the Augore Bore did not work, the developers would bring in a different, perhaps larger machine.

The Convener indicated that this was an interesting project and thanked the presenters.

Decision

To note the update.

4. Pentland Hills Regional Park Operational Update

The Senior Natural Heritage Officer provided a verbal update on operations carried out in the Park for the period October 2017 to May 2018, outlining current staffing levels and adjustments to boundaries. This included the following:

Biodiversity

- 10 surveys took place, 34 members of public attended (most ever)
- Bavelaw Marsh – wildflower meadow surveyed, cut and raked
- Wildflower meadow at Hillend was enlarged by cutting a bigger area 1700m² to 2440m²

Interpretation

- Pentland Inspiration
- Website
- Facebook posts via Edinburgh Outdoors
- Guided Walk and activities
- Seasonal signage
- Doors Open Day 2108
- 50th Pentland Beacon in production, bigger edition due to it being the 50th

Community Groups and Education

- Friends of the Pentlands
- Dean Park Primary involved in wildflower planting
- Fop and Melleny Anglers planted trees around the reservoir
- Woodlands School involved in general conservation jobs
- Duke of Edinburgh Award: (No Data for 2018 Yet)

Harlaw Area

- In addition to the annual Livestock Worrying campaign event at Harlaw PHRP held a 'Responsible Access' event.
- Wildlife Garden Management
- Camping litter and fires
- Hooked on Harlaw ran again in July, very successful at engaging people with angling and access.
- Pond dipping for public held at the wildlife garden pond.
- FoP Tea and Cakes – successful fundraising at Harlaw in June, September, and October.
- Drystone dyking association continue to use Harlaw dykes for training and had repaired several fallen sections.

Harlaw Water Levels

- Water level in Harlaw reservoir drastically low due to lack of rain all summer. Notices erected to warn of risk of slipping on steep muddy banks and getting stuck in mud.

Bonaly Area

- Tree Management
- Car Park Ownership
- Fires
- Vandalism
- Storm damage
- Deer Rescue

Harperrig, Threipmuir, Swanston, Hillend and Boghall

- Boghall Farm - bridge and set of steps had been replaced
- Hillend Country Park – a stile replaced with a self-closing gate at the top of the Ski slope.
- Leithhead - steps and a stile repaired
- Little Vantage Car Park - pot-holes filled in and grass cut
- Harperrig Reservoir
 - field gate replaced and fence and drystone wall repairs.
 - tree planting
 - completed a grant application for a defibrillator to be installed on the outside of Anglers Hut and available for all to use.
- Tree planting Green Cleugh

Dreghorn, Castlelaw and Flotterstone to Carlops

- Picnicking and barbecues by the river
- Car parking
- Filming requests
- Eastside logging

Discussion took place and the following points were made:

- Regarding media, West Lothian Council would circulate material for Pentlands Regional Park.
- Woodland Schools in Currie was involved in general conservation work as one of the community groups.

- The Heritage Service had been approached by other organisations to carry out a branching out programmes.
- The Service tried to discourage people from having fires in the Harlaw Area, although it only had authority over Council land.
- Farmers appreciated the efforts of the staff to put out fires.
- The staff had taken measures such as putting up “no fires” posters, taken water to douse the fires and had asked landowners if they could take up 4x4 landrover. They were considering buying a special sprayer.
- One of the problems regarding the fires was that the fires appeared to be extinguished, but were continuing to burn underground.
- The water level at Harlaw Reservoir was set by SEPA. The lack of rain was responsible for the low water level, not the Hydro Scheme. Threipmuir reservoir now had water in it, therefore, hopefully Harlaw would recover.
- There had been a deluge of water on one section of the Water of Leith, however, this was not the responsibility of SEPA, as the burns feeding in to it were not controlled. It was only the reservoirs that were controlled by SEPA.
- There had been a constructive meeting about sustainable access for Harlaw House. There was no resolution yet and further meetings could take place. It was the responsibility of Balerno Village Trust (BVT) to compile the report.
- BVT wanted to lease Harlaw House not to own it.
- The transfer of the lease was the responsibility of the Council, who owned the property. The issue of access had to be resolved and a decision had to be made on the transfer of the lease.
- It was necessary to create a safe path from Balerno.
- It was necessary to take action regarding the Heritage Lottery Funding Bid.
- There had to be focus on replacing the Pentlands Regional Park Management Plan, which had to be in place to receive lottery funding.
- It was necessary to get funding and it might be possible to get contributions from the three local authorities
- It might be possible for Edinburgh and Lothian Greenbelt Trust to become involved.
- Hopefully an Environmental Impact Assessment would not be required.

The Convener thanked the Senior Natural Heritage Officer for her presentation.

Decision

- 1) The Senior Natural Heritage Officer to send media information to West Lothian Council.
- 2) The Senior Natural Heritage Officer to contact SEPA in respect of the need to raise the water levels at the reservoir at Harlaw.
- 3) The Senior Natural Heritage Officer to circulate the presentation.
- 4) Committee Services to check out possible dates for the next meeting of the PHRP Consultative Forum in February 2019.

- 5) Chris Alcorn (West Lothian Council) to liaise with Charlie Cummings in ELGBT regarding possible funding.
- 6) David Jamieson (Greenspace and Cemeteries Manager) to arrange for officers to meet and discuss ways to progress the Heritage Lottery funding and this group to report back to the Vice-Convenor.
- 7) Each authority to confirm their position by 7 December on their ability to contribute to the Heritage Lottery Funding process and report to David Jamieson.
- 8) The Convenor to communicate to elected members in the three councils that they should attend the meeting of the Joint Committee if possible.

5 Any Other Business

5.1 Meeting with Farmers and Landowners

The representative of the NFU reported that farmers and landowners used to hold meetings once a year and it might be useful to have these again.

It was confirmed that there had been a meeting in February 2018 and it was hoped to have another one.

Decision

The Convenor to discuss with the Senior Natural Heritage Officer, the possibility of holding a meeting of the farmers and landowners in January 2019.

6. Dates for Future Meetings

Consultation Forum – To be confirmed.

Joint Committee – 31 May 2019.

Minutes

Pentland Hills Regional Park Consultative Forum

12.00 noon Friday 22 February 2019 in the Currie RFC, Malleny Park, Balerno, Midlothian

Present:

Councillors Gardiner (in the chair) (The City of Edinburgh Council), Robert Barr (SNFU), Becci Barr (Easter Bavelaw Farm), Alastair McClung (Swanston Farm), Hamish Clark (Friends of the Pentlands), Janice Winning (Scottish Natural Heritage), Rod Dalitz (SHRA).

Community Councils – Johanna Carrie (Fairmilehead Community Council), Hugh Watt (Balerno Community Council).

In Attendance:

Ross Woodside (Edinburgh and Lothian Greenspace Trust), Chris Alcorn (West Lothian Council), Steven Webley, Jenny Hargreaves, Victor Partridge, Tommy McManmon, and Blair Ritchie (City of Edinburgh Council).

Stuart Wright (Hillend Leisure) and Richard Slipper (MRTPI)

1. Minutes

Decision

The minutes of the Pentland Hills Regional Park Consultative Forum of 4 May 2018 were submitted and approved as a correct record.

2. Update on the New Management Plan

The Regional Park Manager provided an update on the New Management Plan. He indicated that he was working on the new draft and officers were working on the strategic framework section of the document, which involved a considerable amount of work. At the meeting of the Officers Group on 7 February, actions had been allocated for officers to carry out. After that, it was hoped there would be collaboration with the partnership organisations to draw together all the relevant information to update the draft plan. He would then pull the draft together.

The Convener noted that the officers were going forward with their bid for the first stage of funding. They had received money from the three councils, which was most welcome. This then was work in progress.

Decision

To note the update.

3. Livestock Attacks (Sheep Worrying)

The Natural Heritage Officer gave an update on livestock attacks, which included the following:

Livestock Attacks in the Pentland Hills

- Eleven reported sheep attacks (“worrying”) in PHRP in 2018
- 2019 started off with one on New Year’s Day (Flotterstone Glen)
- Edinburgh official stats: 4 attacks
- Midlothian stats: 8 attacks
- Actual numbers higher due to lack of reporting to Park or police
- Two dedicated events at Visitor Information Points, to be repeated in 2019
- Police presence on quad bikes throughout year
- Launch of SPARC livestock attacks campaign

Scottish Partnership Against Rural Crime

- Launched 8th January 2019 at Penicuik Estate
- Attended by various press (TV, radio, and newspapers)
- Representatives of British Horse Society, Kennel Club, Police Scotland, PHRP, NFU Scotland, NFU Mutual, Scottish Land and Estates, as well as Emma Harper MSP (South Scotland)
- Some discussion at this event of the need to alter language (“worried?!”), as well as look again at current legislation such as the “1953 Act”

Protection of Livestock (Scotland) Bill

- Launched 21st Feb 2019 (yesterday) at the Scottish Parliament
- Discussed the appropriateness of the term “Worrying” (p18 and 19)
- Discusses NFU requests to alter SOAC so all dogs have to be on leads in vicinity of sheep (“vicinity” not defined)
- Proposed adding alpacas, llamas, deer and ostriches to definition of livestock (1953 Act: cattle, sheep, goats, swine, horses and poultry)
- Proposed the following:
- Increase of penalties for the offence of livestock attack (up to £5000 / six months imprisonment / community penalty, and / or dog ownership life-ban)
- Provision of powers to police officers to require dog owners to take their animal to a vet for evidence gathering purposes
- Enable Scottish Ministers to delegate powers to organisations such as SSPCA to undertake investigations and enforcement

Discussion took place and the following points were made:

- The Scottish Natural Heritage was involved in the livestock campaign. It was intended to lengthen the campaign to allow more awareness. They were trying to target the audience through different methods, including social media. The National Access Forum recently had a meeting with Dog Trust Scotland who wanted to help promote responsible ownership.
- The Senior Natural Heritage Officer had been in touch with the NFU and Radio Scotland had broadcasted a chat show about dogs on leads in public places.
- It was necessary to clarify what was responsible behaviour and “worrying” should be replaced with “dog attacks” or “attacks on livestock”.
- The Dog Trust did not train dogs, as there was limit to how much training could be provided. However, not letting dogs unaccompanied outdoors was important, as there were a large number of attacks resulting from this.
- The NFU was making some representation to the campaign. There was concern that dogs ranging loose in wild areas had an adverse effect on wildlife and people should be made aware of this and be more mindful.
- To try help the situation, the Natural Heritage staff tried to explain to dog owners how to behave properly.

Decision

Members to give feedback on any ideas on dealing with livestock attacks to the Regional Park Manager and the Senior Natural Heritage Officer.

4. Harlaw Visitors Centre (Current Position)

The Convener indicated that BVT was hoping to take this on. They were looking for HLF funding, but the criteria had changed so it was harder to achieve this. So he would take this “off-line” and liaise with officers and BVT in order to seek progress. He had welcomed the initial proposals from BVT and end result would have been “win win” but the timescale had now changed.

Discussion took place and the following points were made:

- The visitor centre was still open and was being well-used, especially by the Friends of the Pentlands (FoP).

- Was there any progress about parking?
- A meeting would be arranged with Lord Roseberry and other stakeholders in due course to discuss parking, paths, tracks and other issues. The result of these discussions would be circulated.
- The FoP supported any progress towards creating the visitor centre.
- If there were paths “off road”, it might encourage people to walk rather than drive. There had been number of potential routes that had been checked out.
- The FoP had identified one path which was usable now and was off the road.

The Convener indicated that there some good suggestions had been made, such as the reduction of traffic and the creation of more paths from Balerno Village. However, more funding was required for the park, with funding from the Council was constrained, therefore, it might be necessary to look at other ways of getting funding streams.

Funding Issues

The Convener explained that officers had suggested it was necessary to consider alternative ways of raising revenue and there would be discussions at the landowners meeting in March, to this end. There would have to be a dialogue with stakeholders to find ways to fund the activities. There might be something to do that landowners were willing to undertake, such as hosting events in the park.

If suitable events were to take place the Natural Heritage Service would provide the service such as ensuring the presence of wardens to prevent damage. It would be necessary to agree how the revenue could be distributed between landowner and council. There was activity in the area already and the service had to be in control to in order to help protect the park.

Discussion took place and the following points were raised:

- At this stage, it was not known what the events would look like. The service would input into how these should be managed.
- Any Council revenue raised by events would be put back into the park.
- It was some difficulty to plan events that took place across various landownerships in the park as it was necessary to first get the permission from all the landowners.
- The first stage could be to discuss at the Landowners Forum, to determine the level of interest and to ensure that it was not detrimental to the park.

- There was an events policy in place, which meant that the Council did not currently charge for events. There was a process in place that could be developed, which also meant identifying an event organizer.
- It might be possible for the Natural Heritage Service to provide wardens and manage events.
- It was necessary to get landowners to communicate and to get written agreement for access across the Pentlands.
- There was at present an ongoing bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF), which meant that there was potential funding to upgrade the paths. With the upgrade of the paths, there would be some management mechanism to pay for the ongoing management of that through events.
- It was necessary to agree a date for the landowners meeting, which might take place the second week in March.
- There had previously been guarantees to upgrade paths, but this had not taken place. Unless there was a guarantee that the paths would be upgraded and maintained by an outside body, there would not be sustainable use.
- There were budgetary constraints and it was necessary to find alternative ways of funding, such as the HFL bid. This would be discussed at the Landowners Forum in March.

Decision

- 1) The Convener to circulate the workshop output report on parking, paths and tracks.
- 2) The Friends of the Pentlands to e-mail Jenny Hargreaves/Convener with suggestions on how to progress Matters.
- 3) To note that the Friends of the Pentlands would wish to attend a meeting with Lord Roseberry in due course.
- 4) The Regional Park Manger to update the Forum about the HLF bid.

5. Pentland Trail Centre

Alistair McLung gave an outline of the proposed Pentland Trail Centre. He explained the process of how the developers intended to make use of the land and he thought that LothianBurn was a good location for that. He explained how they worked through the pre-application process and the purpose of the trail centre. There was a need more funding. The developers had put in place a more professional team and were now trying to move things forward. Conversations were now taking place with Hillend Ski

Slope, they were trying to come together to create something that worked for everybody. So now the emphasis was to move closer to Hillend Ski slope to a better facility.

Richard Slipper presented the report. He was aware of the planning context. The proposed development would be mostly within Edinburgh Council, but partly in Midlothian. He had made the initial proposal for planning application. It was intended to develop mountain biking in Scotland and this was a major initiative to promote this sport. There were already excellent facilities for mountain bikers, but he wanted to get people initially interested in the sport. It was necessary to decide how best to use this land next to the City, which involved constraints and challenges.

He then provided details of the proposals and the surrounding area:

- The ongoing successful business at the Brasserie and at Swanston.
- The story of Lothian Burn etc.
- Trails across the large acreage, running up to the “T” shaped wood, and a trail head.
- There had been consultations in 2015 on the Hub concept.
- The overall cycle catchment had very big urban catchment.
- The survey of 5 years ago indicated that most people travelled by bike to the Pentland venues and less by car.
- Pentlands was most popular for quick “whiz out” of an evening or during the week.
- The age of riders was mostly in the 35-44 category.
- This was an opportunity to get fresh participants into the sport early and older participants who had not been on a mountain bike for a while.
- Female participants represented only 20% of those questioned.
- There was overwhelming approval of proposals of the facilities.
- A team had been appointed to look in more detail at the land quality and character.
- That was the first analysis of where best to install the trails and where to locate the built facilities.

He then outlined the planning application.

- The neighbouring Destination Hillend had proposals for an upgrade for a much enhanced winter sports facility. They had worked to accommodate this.
- Hotel approval was being progressed for the Lothianburn Site.
- They were aware of neighbouring sites and activities and were in active discussions. There was some early work of what work requirements there were for the site.
- The ski slopes were very visible.

- The plan denoted the different challenges of the site.
- Some of the features of the site, included accommodation for “glamping”.
- The trail centres worked in a similar way to skiing in that there would be various grades of difficulty for different users. The footpaths access trails doubled up as access points to other areas
- It was necessary to use the woodland to create an environment and to help to hide the trails.
- With the PPP, a point would be reached where the application was acceptable. There would be approximately 10km of cycling trails, including a facility for walking.
- A planning condition would probably require a method statement stipulating how the paths would be designed. When the PPP stage was complete, the next stage of the planning process would begin.
- The way in which sustainable trails was being built was changing, there was the challenge of wild biking and these trails would help to manage this.
- This would be expensive to build and maintain, had to be sustainable and it was necessary to decide how to raise the revenue.
- The Trail Centre required facilities, such as a clubhouse and it was necessary to get finance to work this facility. The generation of revenue would help with this.

Following the presentation, discussion took place and the following points were made:

- There was a plan for free car parking and this would help provide access to the Commercial Hub.
- The shops and cafes would provide the revenue, it was not intended to charge for car parking.
- Was it anywhere near the ski lift? Was there an option to use the ski lift for uplift?
- It was hoped to make the facility attractive and charging parking fees might diminish this.
- It was necessary to be astute about the proposals. This was a free outdoor recreational sport that to be made sustainable and there had to be an element in the proposals that permitted this. It was hoped to generate the income from the retail element. The developers were looking to get feedback to make this work.
- At a previous meeting of the Joint Committee, as part of the proposed new ski centre, there had been proposals, for routing the bus to see if it was possible to go higher up to the ski centre.

The Convener indicated that the developers should have discussions with the Natural Heritage Service. In the past there had been mountain bikes whose use had been detrimental to the landscape. These proposals potentially could have some impact on the park. The Council was applying for funding from the HLF for the Regional Park. The developers might want to consider this. Other points raised included:

- There was an issue with illegal trail building and the proposed trail centre, would help to manage this.
- There were concerns that the creation of footpaths might lead to more mountain bikes, however, any planning approval would be hedged with conditions and would be linked to the aims of the Regional Park.
- Policing the paths might prove difficult, however, there were various measures that might be implemented such as pedestrian gate or signage to mitigate any damage.
- It would be difficult to stop mountain bikes, however, the facility could be used to educate cyclists to use the paths responsibly.
- It might be the case that illegal bike trails was partly due to a lack of education, opportunity and facilities.
- There were both potential benefits and challenges, which had to be carefully navigated. It had to be decided how to build the design code, ensure that there were safeguards on the site that generated the income and to harness the income to maintain the landscape.
- The developers were keen to speak to the community council and the FoP regarding the planning contributions that were related to this policy.
- A license was not required for a sporting organisation. However, there might need to be one for a bar within the complex.
- The idea of the trails seemed positive, but it was not clear how much more building would be required on the main road.
- The topography of the land would mean that the new buildings would not be visible until people were close to them.
- There was a great deal of tourist activity in the city centre and it would be beneficial to take it to the edges of the city and reduce the number of cars.

- This was a key site in the green belt. There were opportunities to tie the proposed development in to woodland round the Pentland and contribute to the greenbelt.
- The Scottish Forrest Strategy aimed to increase the capacity of the woodland through planting. There might be a case for cross collaboration for woodland planting in the Pentlands.
- The developers should ensure that the development accorded the with aims of the park and was sensitive to woodland policy and considered the impact on wildlife.

The Convener thanked the developers for their presentation.

Decision

Discussions to take place between the developers and the Natural Heritage Service regarding the proposed development.

6. Operational Report

The Senior Natural Heritage Officer presented the Operational Report. Amongst other issues, she referred to the current staffing levels. The Operational Report included the following:

Biodiversity

- 10 surveys took place, 34 members of public attended (most ever)
- Bavelaw Marsh – wildflower meadow surveyed, cut and raked
- Wildflower meadow at Hillend was enlarged by cutting a bigger area 1700m² to 2440m²

Interpretation

- Pentland Inspirations
- Website
- Facebook posts via Edinburgh Outdoors
- Guided walks and activities
- Seasonal signage
- Doors Open Day 2018
- 50th Pentland Beacon in production, bigger edition due to it being the 50th

Community Groups and Education

- Volunteer Rangers
- Friends of the Pentlands
- Dean Park Primary involved in wildflower planting
- FoP and Malleny Anglers planted trees around the reservoir.
- Woodlands School involved in general conservation jobs.
- Duke of Edinburgh Award: (NO DATA FOR 2018 YET) but

Donation Scheme

- RINGGO active throughout the Park
- Boxes now installed at:
 - Swanston
 - Threipmuir
 - Flotterstone
 - Harlaw
 - Bonaly

Harlaw Area

- In addition to the annual Livestock Worrying campaign event at Harlaw PHRP held a 'Responsible Access' event.
- Wildlife Garden Mgt
- Camping litter and fires
- Hooked on Harlaw ran again in July, very successful at engaging people with angling and access.
- Pond dipping for public held at the wildlife garden pond.
- FoP Tea and Cakes – successful fundraising at Harlaw June, Sept, and Oct.
- Drystone dyking association continue to use Harlaw dykes for training and have repaired several fallen sections.

Harlaw and Threiomuir Water level

- Water level in Harlaw and Threiomuir reservoirs drastically low due to lack of rain all summer. Notices erected to warn of risk of slipping on steep muddy banks and getting stuck in mud.

Bonaly Area

- Tree Management

- Car Park Ownership
- Fires
- Vandalism
- Storm damage
- Deer Rescue

Harperrig, Threipmuir, Swanston, Hillend and Boghall

- Boghall Farm - bridge and set of steps at had been replaced
- Bike racks at Swanston and Threipmuir
- Hillend Country Park – a stile replaced with a self-closing gate at the top of the Ski slope.
- Leithhead - steps and a stile repaired
- Little Vantage Car Park - pot-holes filled in and grass cut
- Harperrig Reservoir
 - field gate replaced and fence and drystone wall repairs.
 - tree planting
 - Completed a successful grant application for a defibrillator to be installed on the outside of Anglers Hut and available for all to use.
- Tree planting Green Cleugh

Dreghorn, Castlelaw and Flotterstone to Carlops

- Car parking- Dreghorn closure
- Filming requests
- Vandalism – fence cutting
- Eastside logging and replanting

The Senior Natural Heritage Officer thanked the Friends of Pentlands for their work which included a considerable amount of litter picking, throughout the entire length of Pentlands.

Decision

To note the update.

9. Dates for Future Meetings

Dates for future meetings were as follows:

31 May 2019 Joint Committee

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